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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2007

In Today's Papers

Police Foil Bomb Attack in Ankara on 9/11 Anniversary

All papers report the discovery by the police of an explosives-laden van in a parking lot in downtown Ankara has thwarted a "September 11 plot." "A catastrophe has been averted," Ankara governor Kemal Onal said after police defused the mechanism of about 300 kg of explosives. The parking lot is located in a busy neighborhood with thousands of homes and businesses in the surrounding area. Onal's office said explosives found in the minibus were similar to those used by the PKK. Several papers, however, believe al-Qaeda is another probable perpetrator. Mainstream Sabah asks whether it was a "coincidence" that Osama bin-Laden mentioned Ankara in connection with a historical event in a tape released recently. Papers also speculate probable targets were the US Embassy, the Parliament, and ministry buildings.

Editorial Commentary on 9/11 Anniversary

Nagehan Alci writes in the tabloid Aksam: "On the sixth anniversary, the painful memories of the victims are no longer the only issue related to the 9/11 attacks. We also feel sorry for the new victims who lost their lives because of vengeance and a vindictive attitude.

The US used the attacks of 9/11 as an excuse to act like the sheriff for the whole world. Looking at the events of the recent past, it seems the nature of power of the US administration changed significantly since September 11, 2001. Security has become the prevailing principle for everything -- a policy that led to continuous secrecy in government affairs. The US is rapidly losing its identity as an open society. In short, the US administration has been in a war situation for the last 6 years. And the US administration is functioning under rigid secrecy. More secrecy means less democracy. Given the current psychology in Washington, there is growing speculation that the Pentagon is planning for an attack against Iran. That means new victims and new battlefields are on the horizon. It only looks like a remake of the same movie."

Embassy Ankara Denies Reports Claiming US Ties with the PKK
Hurriyet, Vatan, Yeni Safak, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, and Yeni Safak report on US Embassy Ankara's response to the claims put forth by the British Daily Telegraph that the US supports and maintains contact with the PKK. Papers cite a statement released by the embassy saying, "The US does not support the PKK in any way. Reports to the contrary are fabrications and have no basis in fact. They are designed to drive a wedge between two allies, the United States and Turkey." Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says the DT story claiming armored vehicles were seen in Mount Kandil heightened concerns that private security contractors are backing the terrorist organization.

Demonstrations across Turkey against 1980 Military Coup
All papers report protest demonstrations will be staged in Ankara and other major Turkish cities to mark the 27th anniversary of the September 12, 1980, military takeover. The demonstrators will reportedly rally in front of the US Embassy in Ankara. Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said ahead of the anniversary on Wednesday, "Today democracy and our republic have problems but a military coup can never be a solution".

Iraq Rejects Turkey's Proposal for Cooperation against PKK
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that speaking to CNN Turk in Baghdad, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari blamed Turkey for the failure of his country to undertake concrete steps against the PKK. Zebari complained that Ankara wanted to exclude the Kurdish Administration in Northern Iraq from the talks with Baghdad and that is why they did not sign the memorandum of understanding for cooperation against the PKK drafted during Iraqi PM Maliki's recent visit to Turkey.

US Ambassador Visits Kocatepe Mosque

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Islamist oriented Yeni Safak reported that Ambassador Wilson paid a "surprise visit" to Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara yesterday and met with chief Imam Ismail Cosar for one hour. Imam Cosar said in answer to reporters' questions about the visit "we chatted with the Ambassador and had tea. The Ambassador asked a few questions about the mosque and the difference in the capacity of the mosque during Ramadan." Conservative Bugun carried the same story under the headline "Why did the US Ambassador Visit the Mosque?"

Secretary Rice to Attend Iraq's Neighbors Conference in Istanbul

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Hurriyet, Cumhuriyet: Speaking to press, State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said that Secretary Rice is planning to attend the Iraq Neighbors conference in October in Istanbul. Although no appointments are set yet, the Secretary might have meetings with Iranian and Syrian Foreign Ministers, McCormack added.

TV Highlights

NTV

Domestic News

- President Abdullah Gul went yesterday to Van, the first stop in a four-day trip to southeast Turkey.

- IMF's Mission Turkey Chief Lorenzo Giorgianni and newly appointed senior resident representative Hossein Samiei arrived in Ankara yesterday to hold talks with Treasury Minister Mehmet Simsek on Wednesday.

- Police defused a PKK landmine planted on a railroad track near Ergani town in Diyarbakir province.

- The Muslim holy month of Ramadan starts this evening with prayers in mosques across Turkey.

International News

- Turkish Foreign Ministry officials meet with caution the reports about postponement of the referendum for Kirkuk until May 2008.

Kamal Kirkuki, the deputy speaker of the Iraqi Kurdish parliament, rejected reports claiming a postponement.

- The European Court of Human Rights has approved the appointment of two Turkish Cypriot judges despite the objections of the Greek Cypriots.

- European Parliament rapporteur Ria Oomen-Ruijten said Turkey should meet its promises for EU harmonization reforms without waiting for the approval of the new constitution.

- A group called Democracy in Television wants French media to drop its addiction to President Sarkozy by not mentioning him on November 30.

WILSON